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After the Death of Jackie O, the Deluge

Tell-all books on Kennedys due

GOSSIP *Liz Smith*

You can hunker down and try to ignore them, but you won't be able to escape the spate of Kennedy books coming out in the months ahead. More material constantly surfaces, people who have told laundered versions of what they know are thinking better of it and spilling *all* the beans. Intimates grow bolder. The death of **Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis** was "liberating" to many who feared to talk while she was alive.

They even say that **JFK's** loyal private secretary, **Evelyn Lincoln**, finally talked to the dreaded ace reporter **Seymour Hersh** in the months before her death. Hersh's book could be finished by this coming winter.

I have also read the manuscript of **Ed Klein's** "Jack and Jackie," which arrives in the fall. It is amazing. It's like flying through history on greased lightning. (Mr. Klein isn't just a fine reporter; he is also an excellent writer.) "Jack and Jackie" is already a Book-of-the-Month selection. It will be excerpted in Vanity Fair come September, then appear as a Ladies' Home Journal cover story in October.

And now I learn of another upcoming book, this one by Jackie's own controversial cousin and kinsman, **John Davis**. It will be published in 1998. Davis has already scored impressively with "The Bouviers," "Mafia Dynasty" and "The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster." Literary agent **Marianne Strong** has sold his new work — tentatively titled "JFK and **Mary Pinchot Meyer**: A Tale of Two Murdered Lovers" — to respected editor **Fred Jordan** of Fromm International.

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Like so many events and tragedies surrounding the Kennedys, much of this story seems implausible and unbelievable. There is much coincidental high drama, and, as usual, lots of questions are left unanswered.

The facts are these. **Mary Meyer** was the ex-wife of Washington political columnist **Cord Meyer**. She was the sister-in-law of famous JFK friend **Ben Bradlee** of Newsweek and the Washington Post. She was the best friend of **Cicely** and **James Jesus Angleton**, the head of CIA counterintelligence.

Mary Meyer and Jack Kennedy had known each other since the days when he was at Harvard and she at Vassar. She came from a rich and powerful Pennsylvania family. Her grandfather had twice been governor of the state. The women Jack Kennedy dallied with did not usually possess such impeccable backgrounds. Jackie was said to be furious about JFK's friendship with Mary; Hollywood sexpots and women of a questionable milieu she could dismiss, but Mary Meyer was something else entirely.

Despite Jackie's displeasure, Mary and JFK carried on a 20-month love affair that did not end until his assassination. According to the Davis book, the president and Mary Meyer met at least 40 times in the White House. Some believe she was actually the great love of John F. Kennedy's life.

But only 10 months after the tragedy in Dallas, Mary Meyer herself was brutally murdered on a walking path by the Potomac River. If you think **Vince Foster's** suicide was handled poorly by the Washington police, wait until you read about the investigation into the murder of Mary Meyer. The crime simply faded away and has never been solved.

Author Davis tries to sort out the mystery, linking it to the Kennedy assassination. He reaches a conclusion as to why Mary Meyer was killed.

And what a miniseries this will be! Like **Dominick Dunne's** "A Season in Purgatory," it's made to order.

— Los Angeles Times Syndicate